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Rose Chains

By IZOLA L. FORRESTER.

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It was late when Rosemary arrived. The other guests were rising, and dinner had been announced. She had barely time to toss aside her furs and exchange a few hurried words with Mrs. Creighton.

There was one thing certain, she decided, after a glance at Helen and the rest. They had not heard yet, and she was glad of an hour's respite. After the scene with Dean last night, followed by the solemn one in the morning with her mother, and finally the reproaches and condolences of four younger sisters, each with her individual opinion on the fitness of the engagement, it was a relief to breathe freely without fear of conversation; dissection of her case.

"Who is to take me in?" she asked at the foot of the stairs, but Helen was already bowing and smiling to another guest as she answered:

"You're always late, dear, aren't you? No excuse, though, please. Don't you see the senator looking helpless and alone over there? He's to take me in and thinks I'm lost."

"But"—Rosemary stopped short and went upstairs to the dressing room with a little sudden heartache. For a whole month one only had had the right and privilege of claiming her, and now she was free again. She hoped Helen would not give her to any one brilliant and strenuous tonight, who would bother her by trying to make an impression. She didn't want to be impressed. In a measure she blamed impressionism for her engagement to Dean.

He was a royal comrade, clever and responsive, but not too clever or too responsive. There was a difference. Looking back on the joyous days of the month, she decided that it had been this element of chumship, of mindful affinity, which had been responsible for the whole thing.

As a comrade Dean was splendid, but as a lover in the role of prospective husband to be wedded to for life she had suddenly discovered that he was exacting—most exacting.

Any man who was engaged to a girl and positively forbade any other man falling in love with her was exacting. Moreover, it was foolish, because, really, it was in the abstract a compliment to his own good taste.

She could not help Jack Stowell telling her that he loved her. Of course he loved her. He had told her so on an average of twice a month for over a year. And he was a dear, dear boy.

She smiled contentedly at the mirrored image of herself in the dressing room as she paused to tuck in a few refractory hairpins. Who could help loving her? Even Dean had called her the dearest girl in the world. It was sweet to remember that. Of course he had behaved intolerably to Jack, but when a man is in love—

She laughed softly and buried her lips caressingly in the heart of a single long stemmed La France rose that lay lightly on her breast.

The last trailing gown was vanishing beyond the heavy velvet portieres of the dining room as she came down stairs. Only one lone figure awaited her coming in the wide hall, and she wondered who it could be. Not Jack. Mrs. Creighton did not approve of Jack. In fact, she had once called him a cub. Mild, but irritating—to Jack. The figure turned suddenly at the sound of her coming. It was Dean himself. Half unconsciously she hesitated, her head lifted a trifle higher than usual, her lashes drooping obstinately over telltale eyes.

He was terribly grave and dignified. "I am to have the pleasure of talking you in, Mrs. Creighton said. She evidently does not know."

"I had no idea that you would be here," she spoke indignantly. It was almost impertinent of him, when only last night she had told him she never wished to even look at him again.

"I could hardly help myself, after accepting the invitation a week ago. We will probably meet in the same places for some time, until the breaking of the engagement is announced. At present people consider us indispensable to each other's happiness."

His quiet, courteous sarcasm was maddening under the circumstances. She resolved not to even speak to him again. Old Mr. Rathburn sat at her other hand, and she devoted herself to him with earnest fervor. He was interested in a plan for the irrigation of the great American desert by means of huge spinning-hose nozzles to be operated from balloons.

"But you'll have to get the water up there before you can get it down," objected Rosemary anxiously for the seventh time. She knew that Dean was smiling amusedly. "Unless you attach it to the clouds."

Mr. Rathburn was silent, and she felt withered by a sense of his dis-

pleasure, and she hated the theory of irrigation by balloons or any other way.

Dean was talking across the table to Eleanor Lee, and she suddenly clasped Eleanor with irritation and other unpleasant topics. Next to Dean was Mrs. Chadwick. Her gray curls were just visible beyond his brown ones. She was congratulating him, Rosemary knew. She had been in Europe all summer and had only heard of the betrothal a few days ago. It seemed to Rosemary that she was unnecessarily rapturous and voluble on the subject.

"It is the sweetest time of your life," she was saying. "The betrothal when we laugh and love, and let Cupid bind us in rose chains and drive us at his dear, capricious will, span or tandem."

"It's generally tandem, Mrs. Chadwick," said Dean, with merry scorn. "There must be a leader, you know, and Cupid's law is ladies first." "Ah, but they are only rose chains, Dean," the gray curls were shaken at him rebukingly. "And they break so easily. Once married, they are rose chains still, but some wise fate has slipped links of steel beneath the petals."

"And if we break them now"—Dean paused.

"Then there are only scattered roses in the dust and Cupid weeping and Rosemary—for remembrance. May it never come to you." She smiled at both young faces. "Memory is dear, but not when all it brings to mind are the broken rose chains."

There was a momentary hush. The sweetly modulated old voice had carried to the far ends of the table, and all were listening. Rosemary's gaze rested on her plate. She dared not meet Dean's eyes. The hush passed, and there was the low, light babel of voices again. She heard him speaking to her and held her breath to listen.

"Isn't she an old darling to say that?"

"She doesn't know they are already broken," he could hardly catch the half whisper.

"But are they? Only last night, and no one knows, and it was all a mistake," he bent, with pleasing eyes, toward her. "Rosemary, my Rosemary."

"For remembrance?" She laughed, a low, tremulous little laugh that was the first sign of surrender.

"For life. Roses are sweet, but they need the steel."

She hesitated, her eyes full of questioning doubt.

"Jack didn't mean anything," she said hurriedly. "He didn't really propose. He knew that I was engaged, of course. He only said that he had always loved me, and, after all, he's only a boy. It couldn't matter in the least his loving me when?"

"When what?"

His tone was full of the old imperative, proprietary command, and she met his glance for one swift, losing instant.

"When I loved you."

Mrs. Creighton was rising. As he drew back Rosemary's chair he whispered:

"Broken rose chains can be renewed, can't they, dear? Forgive me."

He caught a fleeting glimpse of her face as she passed on in the wake of Mrs. Chadwick. She was tall and sweet as a young lily in her white lace dinner gown, and he felt a wild, sudden longing to crush her to his heart before them all and win the world of forgiveness.

She was gone, and he was unanswered, but the La France rose lay in his hand, and Rosemary was smiling as she, too, accepted Mrs. Chadwick's congratulations in the drawing room.

Comparative Anatomy.



Master—The eyes are given to us so that we may see. What is the nose given for, Jenkins?
Jenkins—To keep eyeglasses on, sir.

Alan Conyngham

(Original.)

Mrs. Ferrier, widow, with a large fortune at her disposal, no children to occupy her, several estates in which to entertain, still found something wanting in life. She had not married for love, but for money, and at twenty-eight found herself in possession of the money without a husband.

The keynote to her present unsatisfactory condition was that she had at eighteen fallen in love and that love had never been completely stamped out. At the finishing school she had attended was a drawing master, a young Englishman twelve years her senior, about whom there was a subtle charm, which, like the gift of a story teller or songster, is indescribable. Alan Conyngham was a favorite with all the pupils, and several of the girls besides Florence Huntington were in love with him, but Florence alone received a return. He was an honorable fellow and gave her no evidence of his love till the day after she had finished, then he called on her and confessed it.

"But I am going away from you," he said. "You will live here, and you and I cannot live in the same place. Brought up as you have been I could not ask you, could not permit you to join your fortunes with mine, the son of one of those younger sons in a British family who have no share in the family estate."

That was the last Florence Huntington saw of Alan Conyngham for ten years, then when they met it seemed to her that he must have had a hard struggle with poverty, and poverty had been the winner. She had taken a fancy to go to Washington one winter and be present at the opening of a session of congress. She had been there but a few days when she received a card, "Alan Conyngham." It seemed to her that intervening years could only have widened the gap in their different conditions. She had become accustomed to wealth, while it was probable that he was still at the foot of the ladder. She debated whether it would not be better to send him a kind word indicating that they should not meet again, but there was a certain uncontrollable desire in her heart that she could not keep down. She answered the card in person.

There stood Alan Conyngham, a man of forty, the few gray hairs that had come to him not appearing in his English flaxen hair and beard. The change ten years will put on a man was the only change in him, except his clothes, which were shabby.

"Florence," he said, "I ask your pardon for this intrusion again into your life. Not for one moment during the past ten years have I ceased to think of you—to love you. I read an account of the wealthy match you made and learned of the death of your husband. Do not think that I am come to ask you to share the brilliant place you occupy with poverty. No man with true pride could do so. I came to see you and for the comfort of hearing you say, 'I have never completely awakened from the dream of ten years ago.'"

Seeing him, listening to those few words, was enough to break down Florence Ferrier's resolution.

"Nor ever will awake from it," she said.

Conyngham started.

"Now that I have heard what I came to hear," he said, "there is no excuse for my staying."

She begged him not to leave her. She had enough for both. They might snap their fingers at the world.

"No," he said. "You must marry within your station. No true man can accept the wealth you would bring him except he bring you an equivalent."

As he spoke he left the room and the house.

Mrs. Ferrier was surprised the next day to receive an invitation to dinner from the mother of the British minister. Who had been instrumental in securing it she did not know. Indeed, so many were ready to favor her that she did not take pains to discover. A dinner at the British minister's was not to be declined and she accepted.

She was received in the drawing room by a high bred old English lady who, after welcoming and chatting with her a few minutes, left the room. She had been invited for 7 o'clock. "It was now a quarter past the hour and yet there were no other guests present. Presently she saw a sight that for a moment confused her. Surely that was Alan Conyngham. But what was Alan Conyngham doing in this house in fatigues evening dress, and with that badge of nobility?

"Am I dreaming?" she said to him. "Yes, you are dreaming the dream of ten years ago, from which you have never awakened."

"Are you Alan Conyngham?"

"I am."

"I see you are attached to the legation, but what meant those shabby?"

"I am not only Alan Conyngham," he interrupted. "I am the Marquis of Bournemouth and British minister to the United States. After leaving you, ten years ago, I filled another position as drawing master till the year after your marriage, when I was called to England by the death, at the same

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time, of two persons who stood between me and the family title. I entered the diplomatic service and was elevated to this important position from a minor post. I saw a notice of your arrival the day you came and hastened in disguise to test your feelings for me before you should have learned that Alan Conyngham and Lord Bourne-mouth were the same person."

The match proved a happy one, and his wife's fortune an efficient aid to the husband in the high official positions he occupied and in building up his estates.

LENA TREAT BROOKS.

The Personal Equation.

Mr. Ames entered with his nose unequivocally turned up. "Those people in the flat below are cooking onions again," said he. Mrs. Ames lowered one of the windows before she replied. "I wish you wouldn't say 'those people,'" she said. "Their name is Watson."

"Phew!" said Mr. Ames, lowering another window.

"I can't think the odor is so very disagreeable," she said cheerfully.

Mr. Ames looked at her amazed. "Why, I thought you couldn't bear the smell of onions!"

"I don't really like it, of course, but it is such a little thing to be disturbed over."

Mr. Ames looked indignant and injured and felt so; he could not understand his wife's attitude. "I wish you had felt that way sooner," he said dryly. "Last week you made me tell the janitor that if those people didn't stop cooking onions every night we should move."

"Yes, I did," said Mrs. Ames candidly; "but that was before I knew Mrs. Watson. We have exchanged calls this week, and I like her very much." Mr. Ames made a curious noise which his wife was able to interpret.

"I expected you'd take it that way," she said. "But even you must admit that there's a great difference between the smell of a friend's onions and those of people we don't know."—YOUTH'S Companion.

Lady Holland's Luncheon Abolitions.

Lady Murster, granddaughter of King William IV. of England, robes in her biography that in 1837 she went with her mother to take luncheon with Lady Holland. "To this day," she says, "I never taste cold turkey and salad without their conjuring up in my mind's eye Holland House dining room, full of brilliant silver and glass, the smart footmen, and most of all, a most charming looking lady with a very pale face—the palest face, I think, I ever saw and with such sweet, sweet smile. She sat in a large armchair, and her occupation seemed to me, even young as I was, strange in a dining room. She was not sitting at the dining room table with every one else, but in a corner of the room. A maid was kneeling by her bathing the pale, sweet, smiling lady's feet—the loveliest white feet—in a large china foot tub! This lady was the famous Lady Holland, and I heard it said that these, to outsiders, peculiar abolutions took place in the dining room of Holland House during luncheon whether there were visitors or not!"

Important Query.

Impatient Young Man—Nellie, how is our romance—yours and mine—going to end? Nellie (suddenly apprehensive)—Why, Geoffrey, you don't want to skip to the last chapter yet, do you?—Bangor News.

On Matrimonial Seas.

"Is she the captain of the family ship?"

"Oh, yes; he is her second or third mate, I understand."—Puck.

The Other Way.

Inquiring Bore—And do you come down the same way you go up, Mr. Sandbag? Balloonist—No, sir; I try to come down feet first.

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